

CHTHONICOLA, nov. gen.

Char. gen.—*Rostrum* breve, a basi descendens, mandibulâ superiore ad apicem lævè dentatâ, in lateribus compressâ. *Tomia* introrsum curvatæ. *Alæ* concavæ, primario primo perbrevis, tertio, quarto, quinto et sexto longitudine æqualibus. *Tarsi* moderati. *Digiti* breves, posticus medio brevior. *Ungues* anteriores magis quam in "*Antho*" curvati.

Gen. char.—Bill short, gradually descending from the base; the upper mandible slightly notched at the tip, compressed laterally; tomia curving inwards; wings concave; the first primary very short, the third, fourth, fifth and sixth nearly equal and the longest; tail slightly concave, and all the feathers of an equal length; tarsi moderately long; toes short, the hinder toe somewhat longer than the middle one; front claws more curved than in the genus *Anthus*.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF AMPHIOXUS FROM BORNEO.

BY J. E. GRAY, ESQ., F.R.S., ETC. ETC.

Capt. Sir Edward Belcher having most kindly sent to the British Museum the various species of reptiles, worms, &c. in spirit which had been collected during the voyage of H.M.S. Samarang, I hasten to lay before the Society the description of what appears to be a new species of Lancelet (*Branchiostoma*, Costa = *Amphioxus*, Yarrell), premising that I have sent a second specimen to Dr. Clarke, R.N., of Haslar, who has kindly promised to send me some anatomical details of it, which shall be communicated to the Society as soon as they arrive.

I may remark that the specimen from Borneo very much resembles in size the specimen which Mr. Couch obligingly sent to me from Cornwall, and, like it, is more silvery and considerably larger than numerous specimens I have received through the kindness of Dr. Kolliker from Naples. This difference in colour may arise from the Naples specimens having been placed in stronger spirits; but it gives the Cornish and the Borneon specimens much more the resemblance of Annelides, which generally have this metallic iridescent silvery hue.

The resemblance of the Borneon to the Cornish specimen is so striking, that it is very difficult to draw a distinction between them with neatness or brevity; yet they appear to my eye sufficiently different to induce me to regard them as distinct species, which the great geographical distance between their habitats renders probable.

Amphioxus Belcheri.—The Borneon Lancelet appears rather thicker and more convex on the sides than *Amph. lanceolatus*, and the convex ridge which occupies the place of the dorsal fin appears higher and more closely divided by internal transverse septa than in that species, and these septa appear more numerous. I have not been able to observe any beards on the margin of the mouth, which is thickened and rounded; but this may arise from the specimen not being in good condition, especially in this part where it has been injured by the spines of a *Spatangus* which was in the same bottle.

Hab. Borneo, at the mouth of the river Lundu.

I may remark, that the comparison of these Lancelets from Naples, Cornwall and Borneo has induced me to think that most probably the species from Naples may be distinct from the Cornish. All our specimens are smaller and more opaque; the beards of the mouth appear finer; and the dorsal ridge above referred to appears comparatively smaller, even making allowance for the difference in the size of the specimens.

A FEW REMARKS ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF BIRDS IN THE WEST INDIES. BY WILLIAM DENNY, ESQ.

Humboldt, Vigors, Swainson and other eminent naturalists, lament the defective state of knowledge respecting the zoology of the West Indies. The Flora of Jamaica has been often successfully explored; the geology of a great portion has been investigated by De la Beche; the ornithology and entomology however remain nearly in the state in which they were left one hundred years since by Sir Hans Sloane. In all the departments of the natural history of the Antilles much still remains to the inquirer, but in zoology he has an almost unexplored field for his researches. The region of Tree-ferns has been left unexamined for the botanist, the western half of Jamaica for the geologist; but with the exception of about sixty species of birds noticed by Sloane and Browne, the entire ornithology is unknown*, including all the species peculiar to the mountainous districts.

About thirteen years since an attempt was made to send out a party of naturalists to examine the animals and productions of Jamaica, but it failed; and had the party reached those shores, I doubt that their researches would have thrown much additional light on zoology. The insalubrious nature of the climate in the low grounds, the excessive heat, and many other causes, would probably have rendered their exertions fruitless. The naturalist must alike be familiar with the inhabitants of the deadly swamp and the pathless mountain; he must brave the tropical heat and mountain cold, and the sudden transitions of temperature. It is only those inured to the climate by long residence, and who have had fortitude to resist its debilitating effects, or those born in the country whose habits are active and pursuits congenial, that can sustain these difficulties and dangers.

Placed at nearly equal distance from North and South America, it might be supposed that nearly an equal number of the species of each division of that continent might be found in Cuba and Jamaica. This supposition is not however fully borne out by observation, although from our knowledge of the ornithology of Terra Firma being extremely imperfect, it is difficult to render a conclusion free from error. It will hereafter appear, that of the birds of Jamaica, one-half are common to North America, while hardly one-fifth are also found in the southern region of the New World.

Of those species common to the islands more immediately under

* This want of information has been reduced very considerably at the present moment by the appearance of Mr. Gosse's work 'On the Birds of Jamaica.'